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*** **PRESS RELEASE** ***

Jersey City Receives National Recognition for Efforts to Address Racial Injustice and Health Inequities amid COVID-19 Response

Kresge Foundation Selects 25 Health Departments throughout U.S. for Grants to Further Support Strategic Efforts

JERSEY CITY –**Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and the **Health and Human Services Department** announce Jersey City has been chosen as one of 25 communities across the country awarded by the Kresge Foundation for leading in the midst of challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and working to solve issues of racial injustice.

The Kresge Grant has awarded Jersey City \$295,263 to continue the city's efforts of an emergent health intervention platform, increase staff training and further deliver equitable, racially, and ethnically appropriate services to diverse communities throughout the entire city.

"As the most diverse city in the nation, our residents have diverse needs, and we're committed to expanding critical resources many residents rely on. We will continue to identify and address health disparities and to ensure we meet the emerging needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic," said **Mayor Fulop**.

The grant will specifically be used in Jersey City to address health inequities, further health education, and increase access to mental health and violence prevention services. The training component will help develop and certify professional staff to address behavioral health issues and integrating best practices on violence prevention into department programs and services.

"We rely on our nation's public health experts to advance and promote community health," said **Monica Valdes Lupi, Managing Director of Kresge's Health Program**. "In a rapidly changing environment, our ELPH partners have been able to adapt and pivot their work and advance strategic approaches to health in their communities."

"We have drastically improved public access to the myriad of health services we offer from meal deliveries to mental health services, to public showers, to distributing hand sanitizers and masks, and everything in between," said **Stacey Flanagan, Director of the Jersey City Health and Human Services Department**.

“We are meeting the historic demand for our city services, and this grant is a much-needed financial boost to be able to expand upon our success to ensure no one is left behind.”

Jersey City saw a 300% increase in demand for Meals on Wheels throughout the pandemic. Utilizing innovative approaches to close food access gaps, the city enlisted local transportation services and the like to help deliver the meals to ensure no one goes hungry.

Also, during the height of the pandemic, the city’s public showers were reopened with expanded hours to help the homeless maintain sanitation and hygiene, a key factor in curbing the spread of the virus. The location has also provided city staff the chance to build meaningful relationships and provide useful support and supplies, including free flu shots and rapid response COVID-19 testing, in addition to clothing, food, and client assessments.

These innovative efforts are part of a broader initiative where Jersey City was chosen as one of five cities worldwide to engage in a rare partnership with **the World Economic Forum (WEF)**, changing how government approaches public policy as it relates to the global fabric of a healthier world. Making history, Jersey City is the first in the world to serve as a pilot for multi-platform global applications through the one-of-a-kind partnership where the curriculum being developed is based on Jersey City’s work towards creating a healthy city and will serve as an international model for cities worldwide. Work that will soon be brought to cities such as Austin, Mumbai, and Amsterdam to implement.

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About The Kresge Foundation:

The Kresge Foundation was founded in 1924 to promote human progress. Today, Kresge fulfills that mission by building and strengthening pathways to opportunity for low-income people in America’s cities, seeking to dismantle structural and systemic barriers to equality and justice. Using a full array of grant, loan, and other investment tools, Kresge invests more than \$160 million annually to foster economic and social change. For more information visit [kresge.org](https://www.kresge.org).

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